

Unit Outline Emergency Action Plan: Chemical Spills

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 619 of 2001) specifically Regulation 8.

These procedures apply where the hazard, quantity, nature or otherwise of the spill, are such that University personnel cannot deal with the spill directly and immediately, but require the assistance of the Fire Services.

In the event of a spill:

1. Immediately alert others and evacuate the area by activating the fire alarm (use the nearest fire alarm call point).
2. In a safe location, attend to any persons who may have been contaminated. Contaminated clothing must be removed immediately and the skin flushed with water for no less than fifteen minutes.
3. If safe to do so, leave on or establish exhaust ventilation, particularly if a volatile, flammable material is spilled and also control sources of ignition.
4. Establish a danger zone around the area of the spill and prevent all non-essential personnel from entering this zone.

5. Immediately Contact:

CONTACT	PHONE NUMBER
Fire Services	999/112 - EMERGENCY CALL
Head of Unit/Research Group (and Deputies)	
Relevant Academic Supervisor	
Safety Office	EXT 2678
Fire Prevention Officer	(087) 2855582
Security (to prohibit access to hazard area)	EXT 3333

6. Without risk to safety, establish what material spilled, the quantity involved and obtain copies of the relevant safety data sheets, risk assessments, etc.

7. In a safe location, assemble the required clean-up material:
 - Supplementary personal protective equipment appropriate for the spilled agent, and only used where assessed as safe to do so: rubber/plastic gloves, face shields, goggles, aprons (respiratory protective equipment would only be appropriate where selected for a specific, known agent, staff trained in its use, and properly maintained in the interim);
 - Chemical spill kit with absorbents;
 - Large polyethylene buckets or other appropriate containers;
 - Shovels (plastic in the case of flammables);
 - Brushes, mops;
 - Polyethylene dustpans;
 - Suitable detergent/dispersing agent.
8. The Head of Unit (or their appointed deputies) shall take local control of the emergency including liaising with the emergency services to confirm the following:
 - Chemical agent(s) spilled and quantities involved;
 - Special hazards;
 - Recommended clean-up method;
 - Other precautions, relevant information.
9. When the spilled materials have been absorbed or otherwise cleaned-up by the Fire Services, all spill contaminated materials are to be packed into appropriate containers and safely stored pending licensed disposal. Polyethylene bags may be used for small spills. 25/200 L drums with polyethylene liners may be appropriate for larger spills.
10. Arrange for proper disposal of the contaminated absorbent material.
11. Before area is reoccupied a local assessment by the Head of Unit (and monitoring if necessary) shall be carried out to determine if effected area(s) can return to use.